

HOUSE of SECRETS

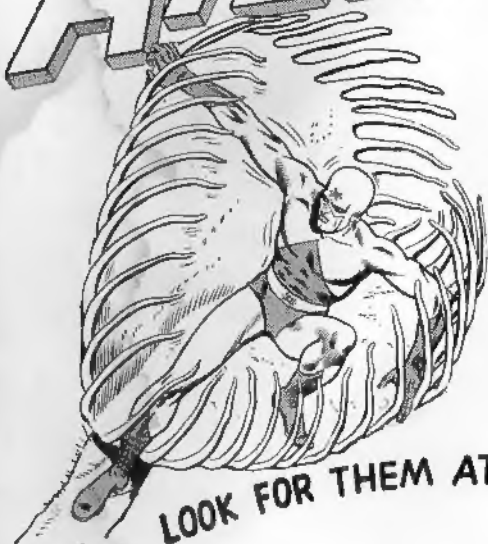
MARK! YOUR
SHADOW--! IT'S
TAKEN ON A LIFE
OF ITS OWN, AND
IS THREATENING
US!



WHAT TERRIBLE POWER FORCED MARK MERLIN
TO EXPOSE EARTH
TO THE... **"INVASION**
from the SHADOW WORLD!"

TOMORROW'S STARS APPEAR TODAY!

The ATOM



HAWKMAN



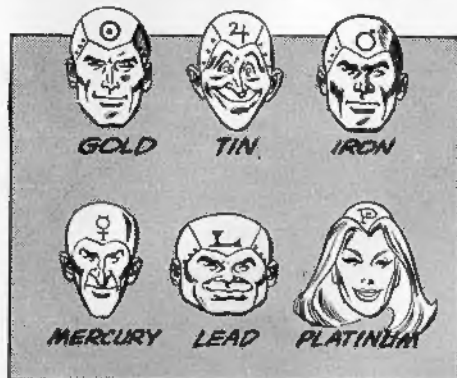
LOOK FOR THEM AT YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND!

AQUAMAN



AND HIS YOUNG ALLY,
AQUALAD!

METAL MEN



THEY'RE DC'S LATEST THEY'RE the GREATEST



MARK MERLIN

SLEUTH OF THE SUPERNATURAL

WHAT IS YOUR SHADOW? IS IT JUST A SILHOUETTE OF YOUR LIVING FORM? OR CAN A SHADOW HAVE LIFE ITSELF? MARK MERLIN LEARNED THE TERRIFYING ANSWER WHEN HE FOUND THAT HE HAD TO FIGHT A PART OF HIMSELF IF HE WERE TO SAVE CIVILIZATION FROM...

the INVADER FROM THE SHADOW WORLD

FRANK--!
PUT THAT BACK
INTO THE OVEN
BEFORE IT'S TOO
LATE! YOU DON'T
REALIZE THE
TERROR IT MIGHT
UNLEASH!

WHAT'S COME
OVER YOU,
MARK? WHAT
ARE YOU
TALKING ABOUT?



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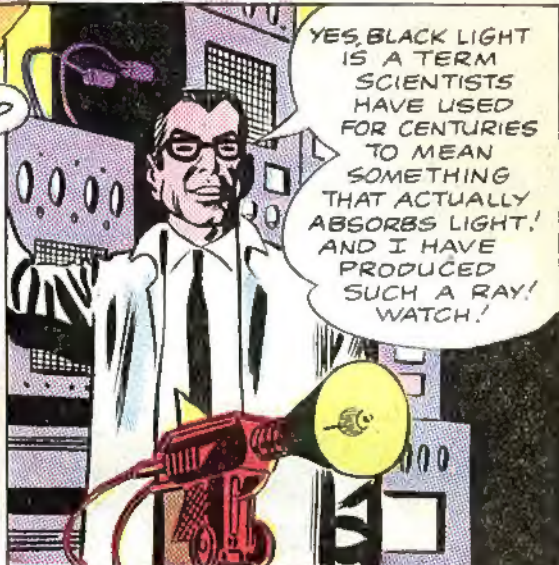
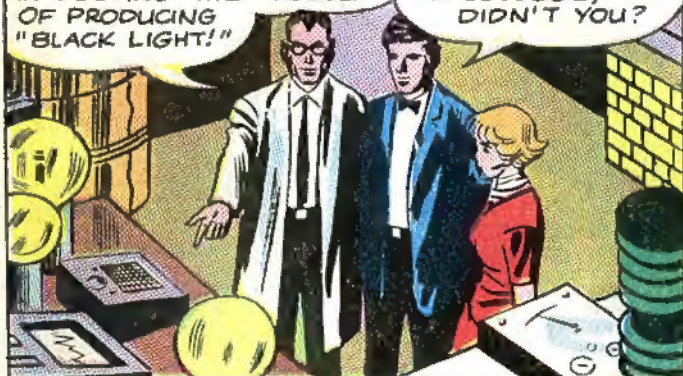
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IN THE LABORATORY OF FAMED SCIENTIST DR. FRANK GUNTHER, MARK MERLIN AND HIS ASSISTANT ELSA LISTEN WRAPTLY...

...AND SO, AFTER YEARS OF INTENSIVE WORK, I HAVE ALMOST SUCCEEDED IN SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF PRODUCING "BLACK LIGHT!"

CONGRATULATIONS, FRANK! YOU STARTED WORKING ON IT WHEN YOU WERE IN COLLEGE, DIDN'T YOU?

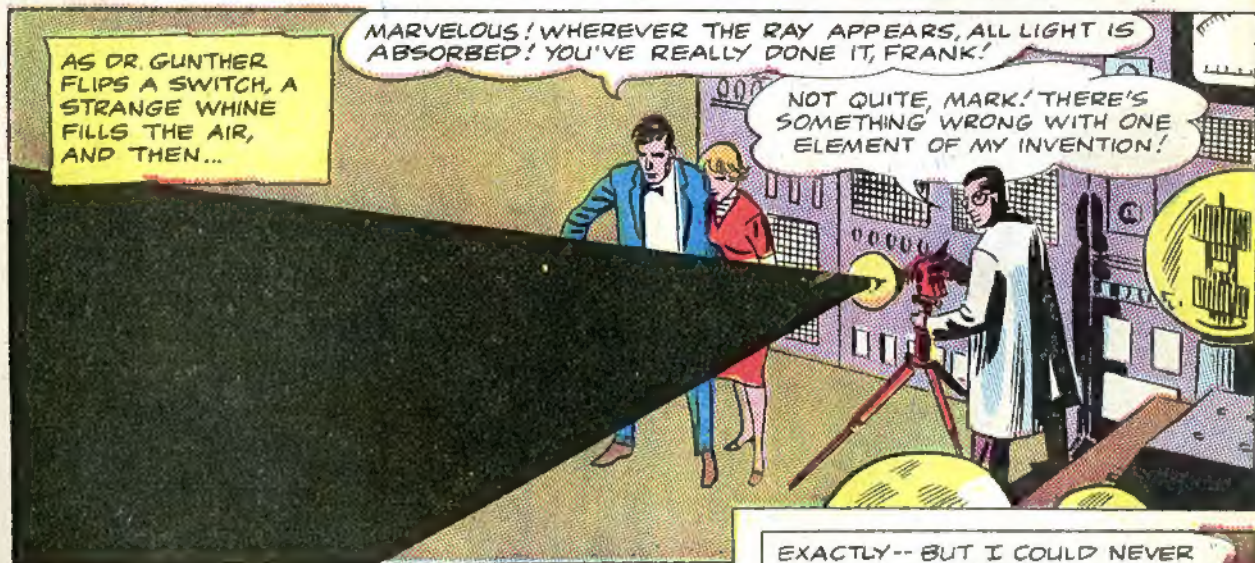
YES, BLACK LIGHT IS A TERM SCIENTISTS HAVE USED FOR CENTURIES TO MEAN SOMETHING THAT ACTUALLY ABSORBS LIGHT! AND I HAVE PRODUCED SUCH A RAY! WATCH!



AS DR. GUNTHER FLIPS A SWITCH, A STRANGE WHINE FILLS THE AIR, AND THEN...

MARVELOUS! WHEREVER THE RAY APPEARS, ALL LIGHT IS ABSORBED! YOU'VE REALLY DONE IT, FRANK!

NOT QUITE, MARK! THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH ONE ELEMENT OF MY INVENTION!



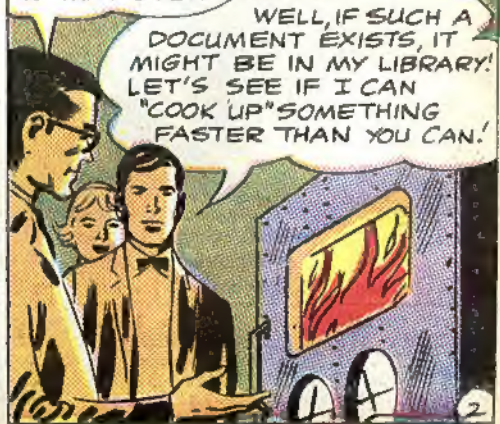
SUDDENLY...

YOU SEE, IT'S BREAKING UP ALREADY! I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO SUSTAIN IT FOR MORE THAN FIVE SECONDS AT A TIME! THAT'S WHY I CALLED YOU, MARK! EVER HEAR OF OMAL THE OMNISCIENT?

OF COURSE! HE WAS A GREAT PERSIAN SCIENTIST-MAGICIAN OF THE FIFTH CENTURY! SAY--DIDN'T HE TRY TO CREATE BLACK LIGHT?

EXACTLY-- BUT I COULD NEVER FIND ANY REPORTS BY OMAL HIMSELF! IF HE SUCCEEDED, HIS NOTES COULD TELL ME WHAT I'VE DONE WRONG! ANYWAY, I'M ALREADY AT WORK, ATTEMPTING TO PERFECT THE MATERIAL INVOLVED, IN THAT OVEN!

WELL, IF SUCH A DOCUMENT EXISTS, IT MIGHT BE IN MY LIBRARY! LET'S SEE IF I CAN "COOK UP" SOMETHING FASTER THAN YOU CAN!



LATER, MARK AND ELSA DRIVE TO HIS MANSION, SET UPON THE BROODING CREST KNOWN AS MYSTERY HILL...



AND SOON AFTER THEY ENTER THE LIBRARY, BOASTING THE WORLD'S LARGEST COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS ON THE SUPERNATURAL...

DID YOU FIND IT, MARK? MARK! WHAT'S WRONG?



THESE TWO HALF-BURNT PIECES OF PARCHMENT ARE AN ACCOUNT OF OMAL'S EXPERIMENTS! ELSA-- WE'VE GOT TO WARN FRANK TO STOP HIS WORK IMMEDIATELY!



QUICKLY, MARK PHONES THE LAB, BUT...

HE DOESN'T ANSWER! WE'VE GOT TO GET OVER THERE WITH-

OUT A MOMENT TO SPARE! IF HE REMOVES THAT THING FROM THE OVEN, IT'LL BE TOO LATE-- FOR ALL OF US!



AND SHORTLY, OUTSIDE THE LAB...

WHIRRRRR

HE CAN'T HEAR ME! A MACHINE'S RUNNING IN THERE THAT DROWNS OUT MY KNOCKING! I'VE GOT TO CRASH THE DOOR IN!



AGAIN AND AGAIN MARK SLAMS HIS SHOULDER AGAINST THE DOOR UNTIL FINALLY...

MARK! YOU'RE JUST IN TIME! I CREATED THE CRYSTAL THAT WILL PERFECT MY INVENTION!

TOO LATE! PUT IT BACK, FRANK! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE! PUT IT BACK!



CRASH

BUT, AS THE SCIENTIST STANDS PARALYZED WITH SHOCK AND CONFUSION, MARK RUSHES IN, SEIZES THE TONGS TO RETURN THE GLOWING CRYSTAL...



AGGGH! THE LIGHT FROM THE OVEN -- SHINING THROUGH THE CRYSTAL! I CAN FEEL IT HITTING ME...OH, INFLECTING SUCH TERRIBLE PAIN!

WITH A DETERMINED EFFORT, MARK SLAMS SHUT THE OVEN DOOR...

I TRIED TO WARN YOU! I FOUND TWO PIECES OF OMAL'S DOCUMENT! THE FIRST SAID, "I HAVE PERFECTED BLACK LIGHT!"... THE SECOND, "I HAVE DISCOVERED PHOTIUM CRYSTALS, BUT THEY RELEASED A TERRIBLE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD!"

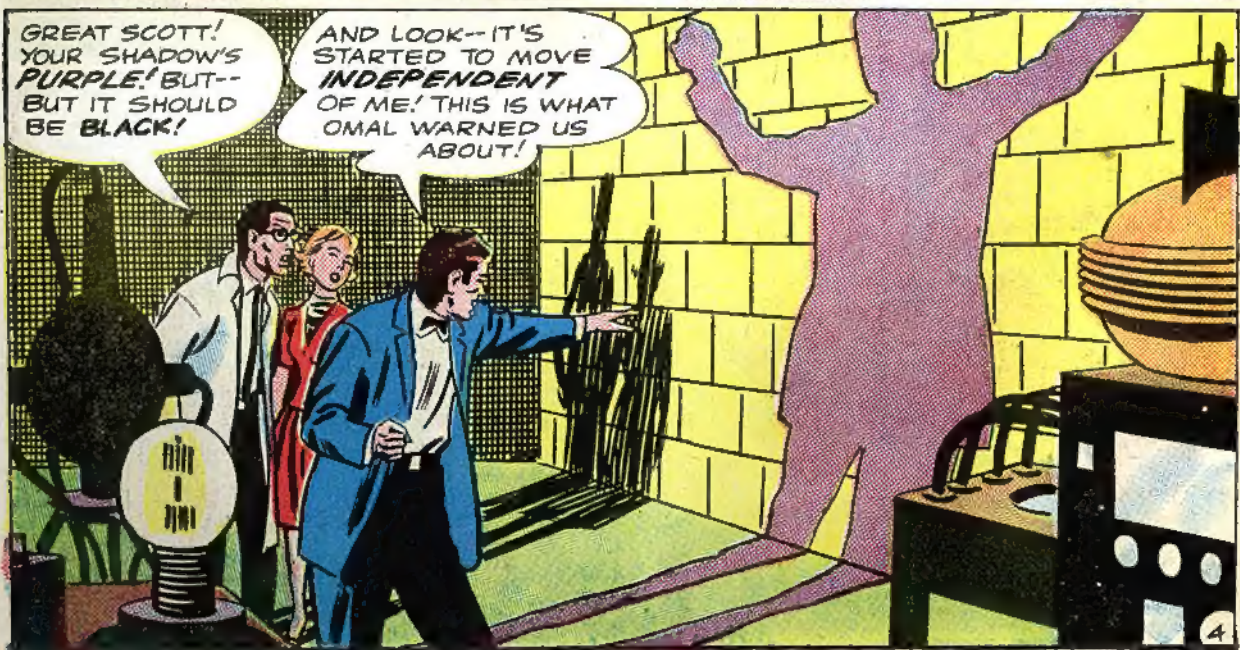
SLAM

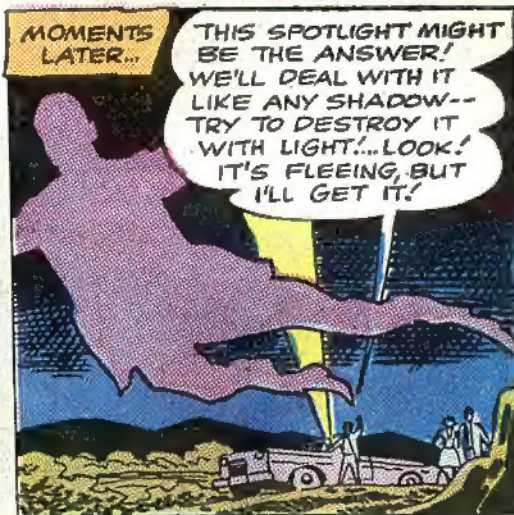
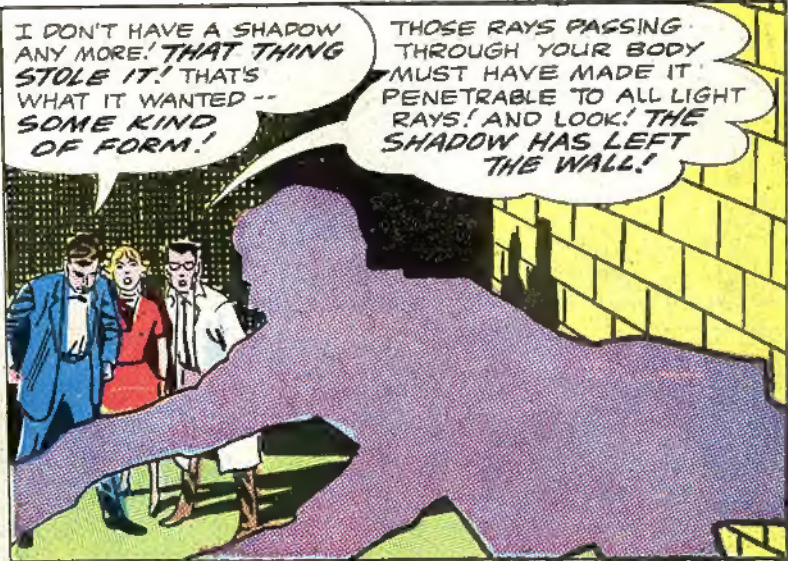
I DON'T KNOW WHAT FORM THIS THING TOOK, BUT WHEN THAT LIGHT HIT ME, I ALMOST PASSED OUT! I--I STILL FEEL VERY WEAK!

YOU'VE GOT TO GET SOME REST, AND--OH, NO! MARK, LOOK! ON THE FLOOR! YOUR SHADOW!

GREAT SCOTT! YOUR SHADOW'S PURPLE! BUT-- BUT IT SHOULD BE BLACK!

AND LOOK--IT'S STARTED TO MOVE INDEPENDENT OF ME! THIS IS WHAT OMAL WARNED US ABOUT!





BUT EVEN AS THE
ALARM GOES OUT...

THE DAM WAS IN
ITS WAY, SO IT
DESTROYED IT!

AND AGAIN...

LOOK OUT! IT
TOPPLED THAT
POWER LINE!

MEANWHILE, AT AN EMERGENCY HEADQUARTERS
SET UP TO TRACK THE RAMPAGING SHADOW-
MENACE...

THE SHADOW
CREATURE HAS LEFT OUR
MAINLAND AND IS CROSSING
THE OCEAN, TAKING THIS
ROUTE!

YOU SEE
WHERE IT'S
HEADED?

THE LAND THAT
WAS ONCE CALLED
PERSIA! THE HOME
OF OMAL THE
OMNISCIENT!

BUT
WHY,
MARK?

I'M NOT SURE, BUT
I'VE GOT A HUNCH!
WE'RE GOING
AFTER IT, FRANK--
AND I WANT YOU
TO BRING ALL THE
MATERIALS OF
YOUR RECENT
EXPERIMENTS!

LATER, AS A
CHARTERED
JET SPEEDS
OVER THE
MIDDLE-
EAST...

THERE IT IS--JUST
WHAT I FEARED! A
MOUNTAIN OF PURE
PHOTIUM! I KNEW THAT
OMAL MUST HAVE FOUND
A NATURAL SOURCE OF
THE CRYSTAL!

AND THE SHADOW-
THING CAME HERE TO
EXPOSE THE DEPOSIT!
BUT WHY, MARK? WHAT'S
IT AFTER?



THERE'S YOUR ANSWER, FRANK! IT'S DRIVING THOSE PEOPLE TOWARD THE MOUNTAIN OF PHOTIUM! IF THEY'RE HIT BY LIGHT FROM THE CRYSTAL, THEY'LL RELEASE **MORE SHADOW-DANGERS!**
RIGHT, MARK?

YES, ELSA-- AND WE HAVE NO WAY TO REVERSE THE SITUATION!

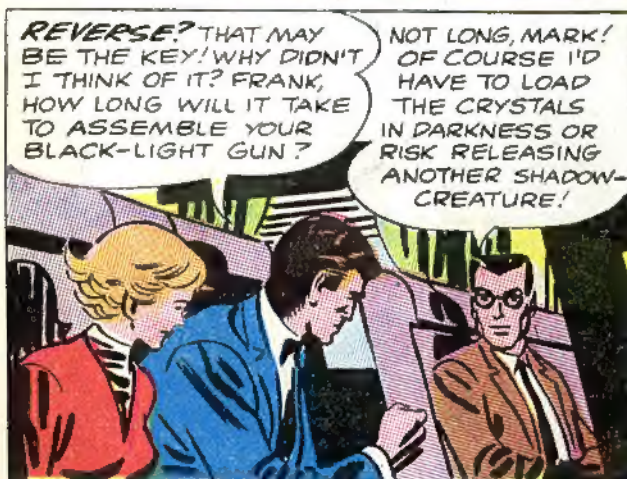
REVERSE? THAT MAY BE THE KEY! WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF IT? FRANK, HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO ASSEMBLE YOUR BLACK-LIGHT GUN?

NOT LONG, MARK! OF COURSE I'D HAVE TO LOAD THE CRYSTALS IN DARKNESS OR RISK RELEASING ANOTHER SHADOW-CREATURE!

AND SHORTLY, IN A DARKENED COMPARTMENT...

BAD NEWS, MARK! THE PHOTIUM CRYSTALS I SYNTHESIZED WERE UNSTABLE! TWO HAVE TURNED TO SAND! AND THE ONE THAT'S LEFT MAY NOT LAST LONG!

NEVER MIND! SLIP IT INTO THE BLACK-LIGHT GUN! I'LL HAVE TO TAKE MY CHANCES!

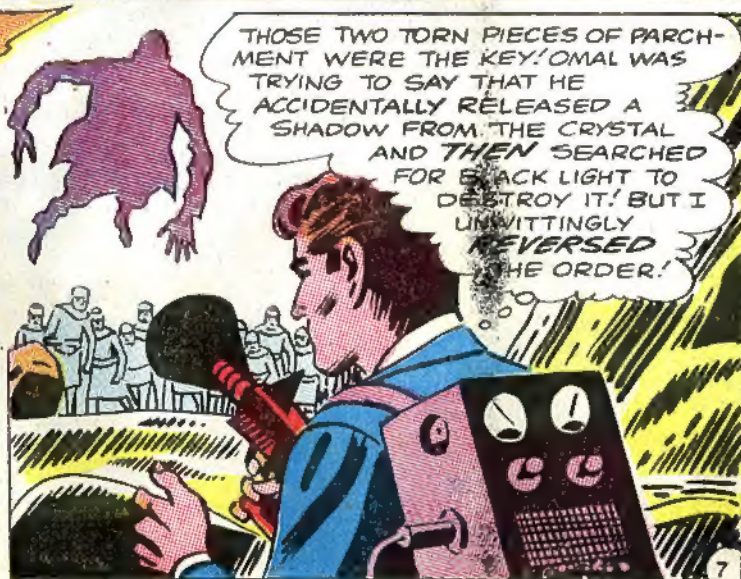


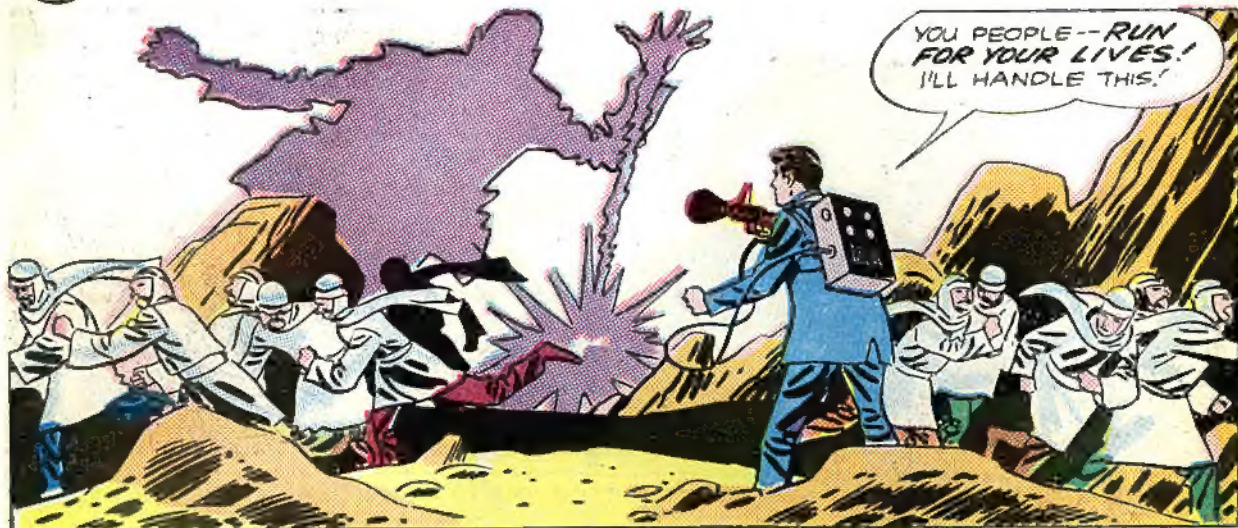
NO SOONER DOES THE PLANE LAND THAN MARK RACES OUT ON HIS SOLO MISSION...

I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAFELY STAND IN FRONT OF IT! THE PHOTIUM CRYSTALS STOLE ALL THEY CAN FROM ME!



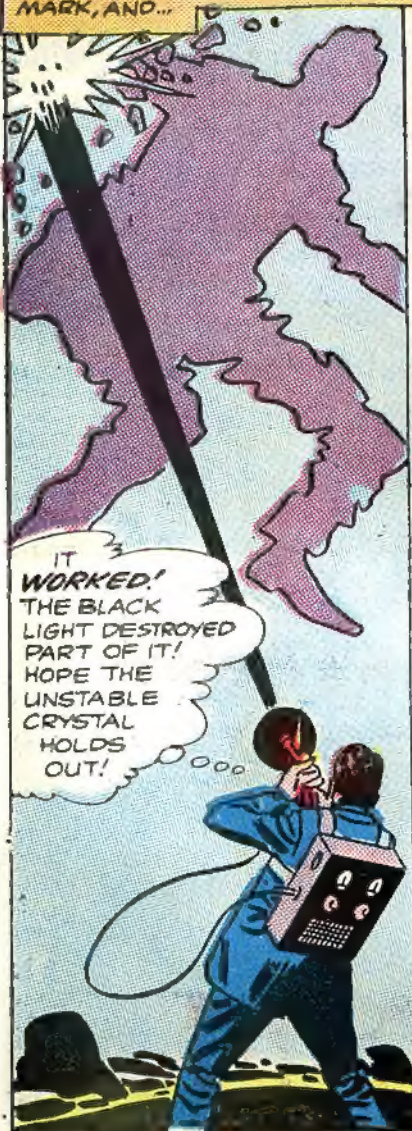
THOSE TWO TORN PIECES OF PARCHMENT WERE THE KEY! OMAL WAS TRYING TO SAY THAT HE ACCIDENTALLY RELEASED A SHADOW FROM THE CRYSTAL AND THEN SEARCHED FOR BLACK LIGHT TO DESTROY IT! BUT I UNWITTINGLY **REVERSED** THE ORDER!





YOU PEOPLE--**RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!**
I'LL HANDLE THIS!

SWIFTLY, THE MONSTROUS MENACE WHICH WAS ONCE PART OF HIM DARTS TOWARD MARK, AND...



IT **WORKED!**
THE BLACK LIGHT DESTROYED PART OF IT! HOPE THE UNSTABLE CRYSTAL HOLDS OUT!



IT'S ALMOST DONE FOR! BUT THE RAY IS BEGINNING TO GIVE OUT!

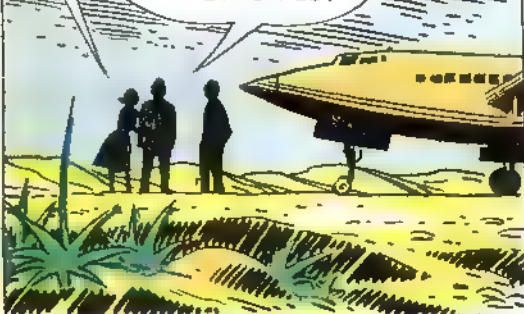


I DID IT! AND THAT'S ALL THE RAY HAD LEFT-- BEFORE PETERING OUT!

WHEN MARK REJOINS THE OTHERS...

MARK,
YOU
DID
IT!

YES, BUT THE JOB'S NOT
FINISHED YET! WE MUST
DISPOSE OF THAT MOUNTAIN
OF PHOTIUM CRYSTAL
FOREVER! BUT DYNAMITING
IT WOULD ONLY CREATE
MILLIONS OF SMALL
CRYSTALS!

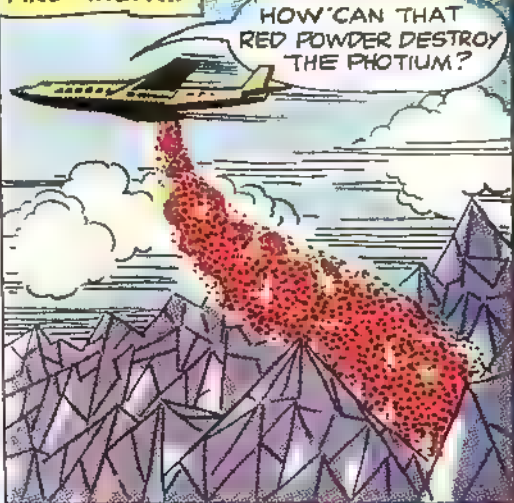


I'VE GOT
THE
ANSWER,
FRANK-- BUT
I'LL NEED
YOUR HELP!



PREPARATIONS ARE SWIFTLY MADE
AND THEN...

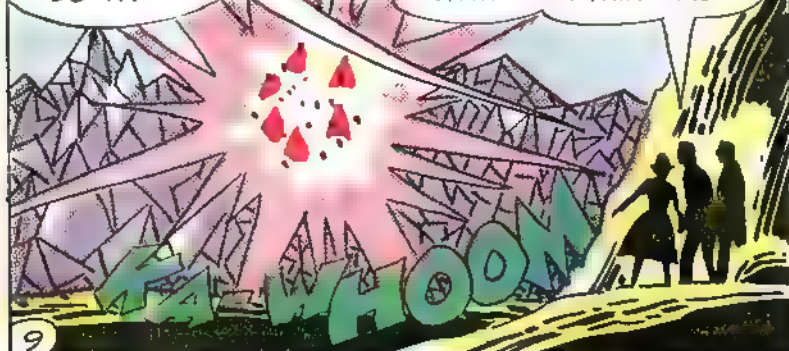
HOW CAN THAT
RED POWDER DESTROY
THE PHOTIUM?



THE ANSWER BECOMES APPARENT SOON AFTER THE
PAIR RETURN...

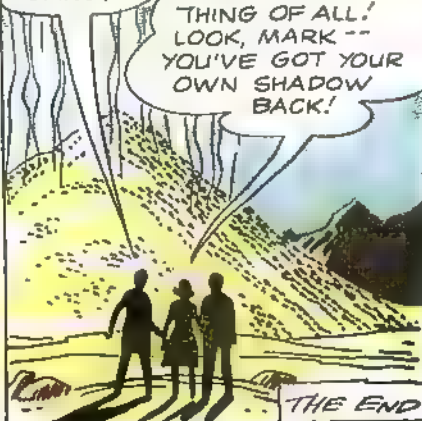
IT-- IT'S CRUMBLING,
MARK! THE WHOLE
MOUNTAIN IS
FALLING APART!
BUT HOW'D YOU
DO IT?

FRANK TOLD ME THAT THE
CRYSTALS HE'D CREATED WERE
UNSTABLE BECAUSE OF A
SPECIFIC MINERAL HE'D USED
BY MISTAKE! SO WE
BOMBARDED THE MOUNTAIN
WITH THAT MINERAL!



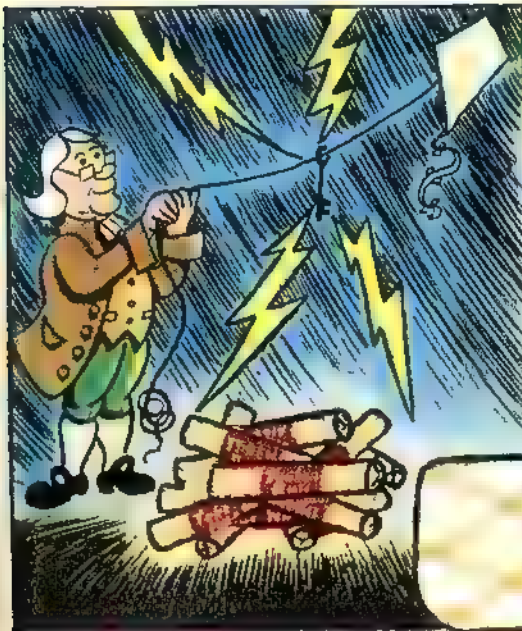
THAT MADE THE WHOLE
MOUNTAIN UNSTABLE!
AND NOW IT'S
TURNED TO
HARMLESS
SAND!

BUT THAT'S
NOT THE MOST
WONDERFUL
THING OF ALL!
LOOK, MARK--
YOU'VE GOT YOUR
OWN SHADOW
BACK!



IN THE NEXT ISSUE! A SPECTACULAR STORY FEATURING MARK MERLIN'S ORIGIN AND THE FIRST AND WEIRDEST CASE HE EVER ENCOUNTERED!

ADVERTISEMENT

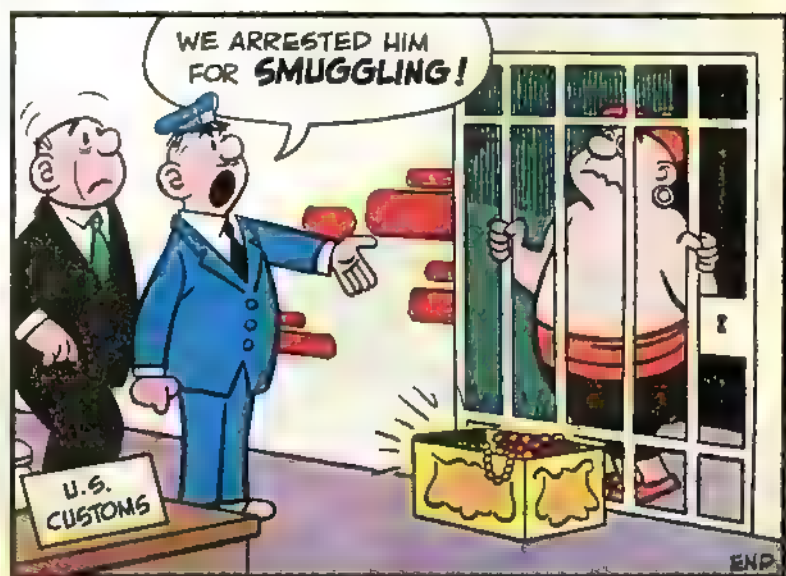
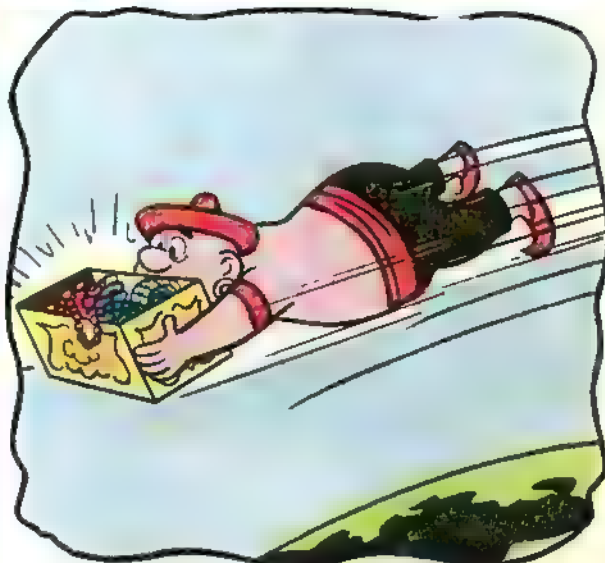
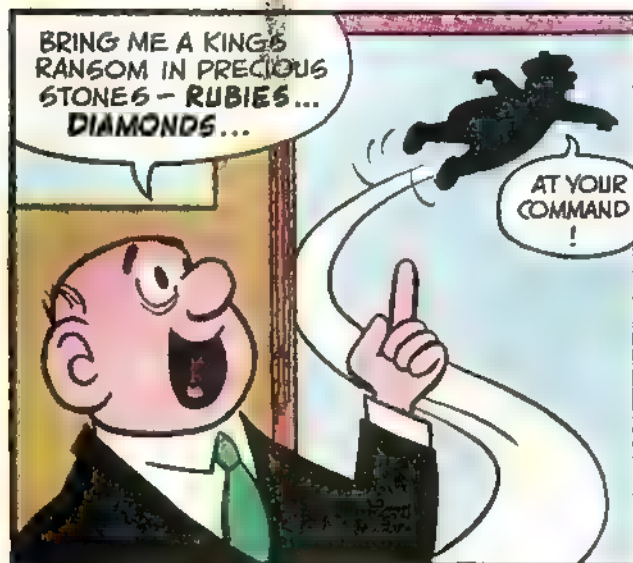
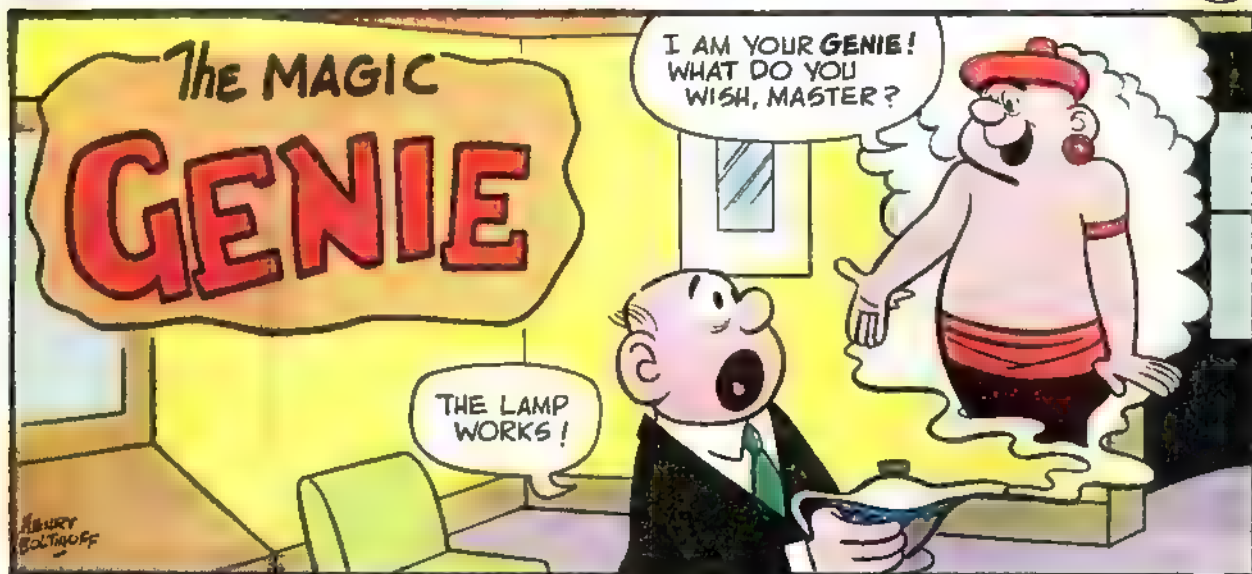


Tootsie Roll Makes HISTORY!

When Franklin discovered electricity,
It was only one of his goals.
He sent up his kite
'cause he needed more light
To help find his lost Tootsie Rolls

AMERICA'S FAVORITE CANDY

Tootsie Roll



BATMAN'S NEW SECRET IDENTITY!

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE
WHOLE WORLD LEARNS THAT
BATMAN is
BRUCE WAYNE?

READ THE STARTLING
ANSWER IN THIS THRILLING
2-PART ADVENTURE!



AND WHAT HAPPENS WHEN
BATMAN'S OLD ENEMY,
THE **JOKER**, JOINS
SUPERMAN'S ARCH-
FOE, **LUTHOR**?
FOR THE BATTLE OF
THE CENTURY READ...

JOKER- LUTHOR, INCORPORATED!

NOW ON SALE EVERYWHERE!



YOU ARE ABOUT TO TAKE THE ROLLER-COASTER RIDE OF YOUR LIFE--ONE YOU'LL NEVER FORGET! YOU'LL ROAR OVER THE LOOP-THE-LOOPS INTO A LAND BEYOND THE IMAGINATION! THE PRICE? JUST A QUARTER ..



25 CENTS TO NOWHERE

WE'RE GOING HIGHER--
HIGHER-- RIGHT INTO
A CLOUD!



FOUR PASSENGERS ABOARD A ROLLER-COASTER AT **FUNLAND**, SPEEDING ALONG THE TRACKS... AN ORDINARY EVERYDAY SCENE OF GAIETY-- IT **SEEMS!** BUT LOOK BACK BRIEFLY TO A FEW MOMENTS AGO! GERALD FARRADAY, BUDDING YOUNG SCULPTOR, BOUGHT A TICKET...



RIDE THE **RIOT RIDE**, FOLKS-- A THRILL ON EVERY HILL-- TAKES NERVE ON EVERY CURVE! JUST 25 CENTS!

AS HE HEADED FOR THE CAR, FARRADAY DIDN'T SHARE IN THE MERRIMENT OF **FUNLAND**-- HE THOUGHT ONLY OF HIS EXHIBITION THE NIGHT BEFORE...

THEY CALL THIS **ART**? IT'S JUNK!

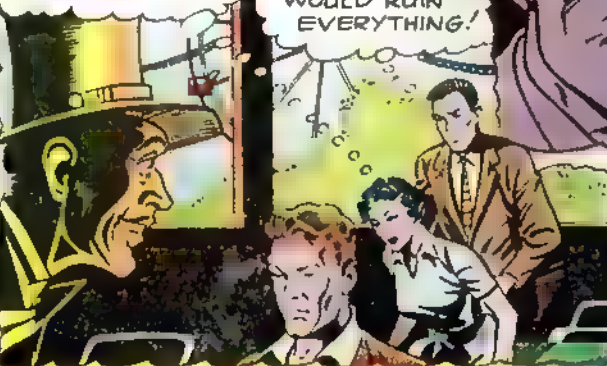
IT'S NO USE... I'M A FLOP-- A DUD!



SEATING THEMSELVES BEHIND FARRADAY WHERE TWO MORE PERSONS WHO WERE HAVING ANYTHING BUT FUN...

HOW MUCH LONGER CAN I DECEIVE FRANKIE... NOT TELL HIM WHO I **REALLY** AM?

ANNE'S A NICE KID-- I SHOULD LEVEL WITH HER... BUT THAT WOULD RUIN EVERYTHING!



THEY WERE ANNE TRAVERS AND FRANKIE WALONE-- MIXED UP, CONFUSED... UNABLE TO FACE REALITY... TO REVEAL THE HARSH TRUTH!

BUT JUST AS THE CAR STARTED UP...

EASY, NERO-- EASY, BOY! THAT'S IT, FELLOWS-- KEEP A FIRM GRIP ON HIM... WE'LL HAVE HIM BACK IN HIS CAGE!



I SCRAPED... SAVED... **HOARDED**. THEN LOST EVERYTHING IN ONE FOOLISH MOVE! I'M A RUINED MAN!



OFF WE GO, FOLKS-- ON THE RIDE OF YOUR LIVES!

AND NOW THE COASTER CAR LURCHED FORWARD, PICKING UP SPEED...



...AND IN THE NEXT SPLIT-SECOND, IT WILL ROAR OFF TO ITS STRANGE DESTINATION!

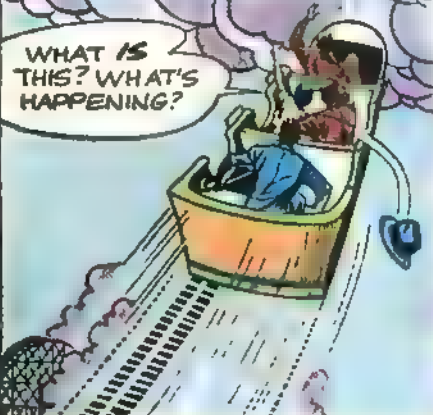


HOUSE OF SECRETS



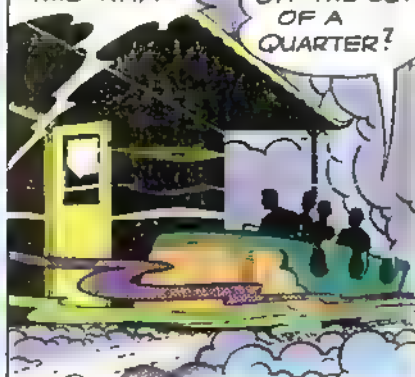
THEY'RE OFF--
MOVING FASTER...
FASTER!

WHAT IS
THIS? WHAT'S
HAPPENING?



MOMENTARILY, THE CAR SEEMS
TO HANG IN A FOGBOUND
WORLD--THEN...

EMERGENCY
STOP, FOLKS!
PLEASE STEP
THIS WAY!



STOPPING,
EH? WHAT
IS THIS--A
PLAN TO
GYP ME OUT
OF A
QUARTER?

AS THEY ENTER THE SHED...

DOWN THE
STAIRWAY--
PLEASE...

I DON'T KNOW
WHAT WENT
WRONG, BUT
THAT'S THE
SHORTEST
RIDE I
EVER TOOK!

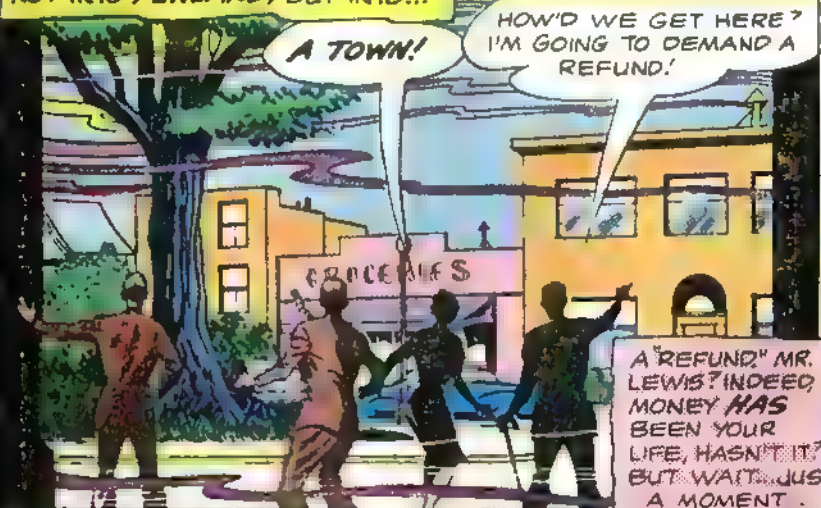


WRONG, FRANKIE MALONE!
YOUR "RIDE" IS JUST BEGINNING!

AND REACHING THE BOTTOM OF THE LANDING, THEY STEP FORTH--
NOT INTO *FUNLAND*, BUT INTO...

A TOWN!

HOW'D WE GET HERE?
I'M GOING TO DEMAND A
REFUND!



A "REFUND," MR.
LEWIS? INDEED,
MONEY HAS
BEEN YOUR
LIFE, HASN'T IT?
BUT WAIT--JUST
A MOMENT.

I THINK I
GET THE ANGLE!
THIS IS THE
END OF THE
RIDE AND BY
SOME TRICK,
THEY GET US
TO THE
STREET!

BUT WE ONLY
WALKED
DOWN A
FLIGHT OF
STAIRS! HOW
COULD WE
BE COM-
PLETELY
OUT OF
FUNLAND?

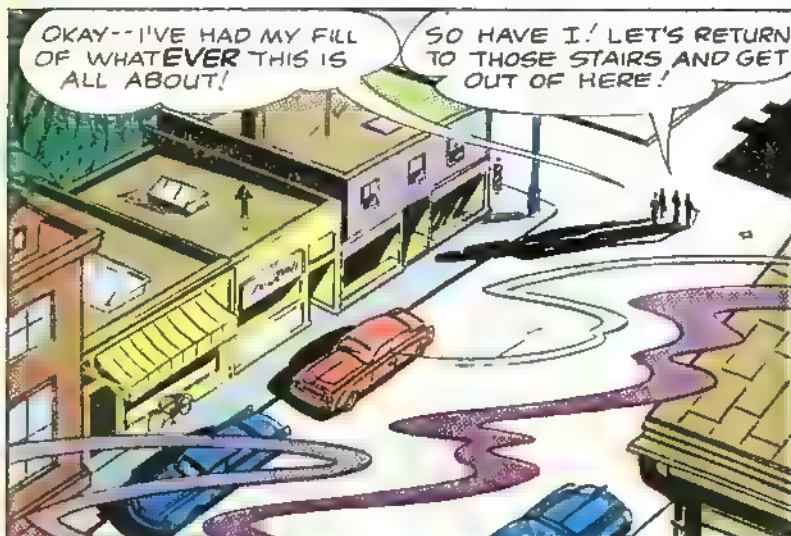


DO YOU NOTICE
SOMETHING
STRANGE?

YEAH--THERE
ISN'T A SOUL
AROUND!

WHAT KIND OF A DESERTED
PLACE IS THIS? WHERE IN
BLAZES *IS* EVERYBODY?





OKAY--I'VE HAD MY FILL OF WHATEVER THIS IS ALL ABOUT!

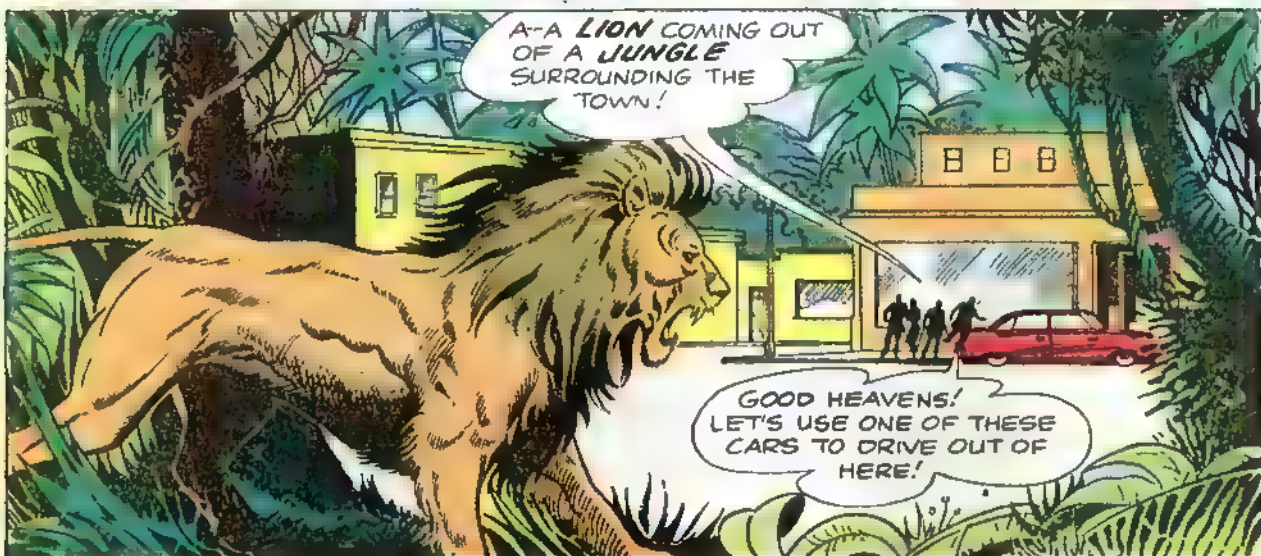
SO HAVE I! LET'S RETURN TO THOSE STAIRS AND GET OUT OF HERE!

BUT THEY SEARCH VAINLY UP ONE STREET AND DOWN ANOTHER...

IT'S NO USE! THAT STAIRWAY HAS VANISHED!

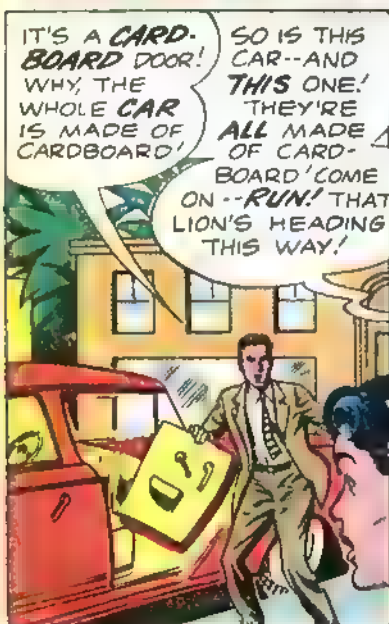
WE'RE LIKE CASTAWAYS ON A DESERT ISLAND--

L-LOOK THERE!



A-A LION COMING OUT OF A JUNGLE SURROUNDING THE TOWN!

GOOD HEAVENS! LET'S USE ONE OF THESE CARS TO DRIVE OUT OF HERE!



IT'S A CARD-BOARD DOOR! WHY, THE WHOLE CAR IS MADE OF CARDBOARD!

SO IS THIS CAR--AND THIS ONE! THEY'RE ALL MADE OF CARD-BOARD! COME ON--RUN! THAT LION'S HEADING THIS WAY!



INTO THIS BUILDING--QUICKLY!

ROOM FOR ONLY THREE IN THIS ELEVATOR!

LET ME IN! FOR THE LOVE O' PETE, DON'T LEAVE ME OUT HERE!

GO AHEAD--GET IN! I'LL TAKE THE STAIRS!



MOMENTS ELAPSE, THEN--

THAT BLASTED ELEVATOR WOULDN'T GO UP-- ONLY DOWN!

IT'S DARK-- AND SCARY! BUT, AT LEAST, WE'VE GOT CANDLES!

THERE'S A DOOR OVER THERE! LET'S TRY IT--!

WONDER WHERE THIS LEADS TO...?

DOESN'T MATTER-- AS LONG AS WE GET AWAY FROM THAT BEAST!



A SUDDEN VOICE FROM ABOVE STARTLES THEM...

HELLO! HOW DID YOU GET DOWN THERE? I ROAMED AROUND... COULDN'T FIND ANY STAIRS--

LISTEN! THE LION'S OUTSIDE-- TRYING TO CLAW HIS WAY THROUGH!

THERE'S NO LADDER OR ROPE UP HERE! WHAT CAN I DO? I'M A SCULPTOR, NOT A MAGICIAN!



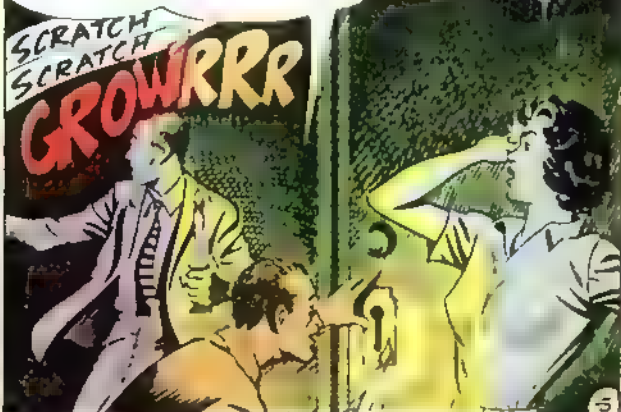
THE DOOR'S LOCKED! WE CAN'T GET OUT!

GROWRRR
SCRATCH
SCRATCH

I WAS ONCE AN APPRENTICE LOCKSMITH FOR TWO YEARS.. EARNED MY FIRST \$100 THAT WAY! H'MMM-- BETWEEN THAT SCULPTOR AND ME, WE MIGHT GET US OUT OF HERE!

BUT HURRY! PLEASE-- HURRY!

SCRATCH
SCRATCH
GROWRRR





HOUSE OF SECRETS



CAN YOU FIND ANY TOOLS UP THERE?

YES...HERE'S A CLOSET--AND THERE'S A TOOL KIT INSIDE!

SNUFFING OUT HIS CANDLE, LEWIS STUDIES THE LOCK, THEN WITH HIS PENKNIFE, BEGINS WHITTLED...

PRECIOUS SECONDS SLIP BY-- THEN, WRAPPING THE WAX IMPRESSION IN A HANDKERCHIEF, LEWIS PITCHES IT UP TO FARRADAY...

THE WALL'S BEING TORN AWAY! THE LION WILL SOON BE IN HERE!

I THINK I CAN MAKE A WAX SKELETON KEY! AND TO THINK I USED TO GET PAID FOR THIS...

MAKE US A STURDY KEY OUT OF THAT AND DO IT FAST!

WHAT IRONY? ALL MY TALENT IS GOOD FOR IS TO SCULPT AN ORDINARY KEY!

FRANK CARRY FARRADAY SEARCHES IN VAIN FOR A SUITABLE PIECE OF METAL...

ANOTHER FEW MINUTES AND THE FRAGILE REPRODUCTION IS DROPPED DOWN, CAUGHT--AND PUT TO WORK--EVEN AS SHARP CLAWS TEAR OPEN THE WALL.

MUST USE THIS THIN PIECE OF MARBLE WHICH I PRIED LOOSE FROM THE WALL FACING! IT'S RISKY--COULD BREAK EASILY... BUT IT'S OUR ONLY HOPE!

I WILL HAVE TO DO! KEEP WORKING!

IT'S BROKEN THROUGH!

TOO LATE TO TELL FRANKIE THE TRUTH ABOUT THE REAL ME!

WE'RE GONERS! WHY DIDN'T I LEVEL WITH ANNE BEFORE NOW?

I OPENED IT. I OPENED THE DOOR!

OUT THEY DASH--JUST IN TIME -- SLAMMING THE DOOR SHUT BEHIND THEM...

I'M NOT A FLOP! THESE HANDS SCULPTED MY MASTERPIECE --A KEY THAT SAVED THREE LIVES!

YES, GERALD FARRADAY, IN THIS "LAND OF NOWHERE," YOU HAVE FOUND YOURSELF!

OUTSIDE, WHEN THE FOUR REGROUP, THE SKIES SUDDENLY GROW DARK AND BOLTS OF LIGHTNING AND THUNDER SPLIT THE HEAVENS FOLLOWED BY A DELUGE...

HEAD FOR THE COFFEE SHOP OVER THERE! WE CAN GET DRY... MAYBE FIND SOME FOOD!

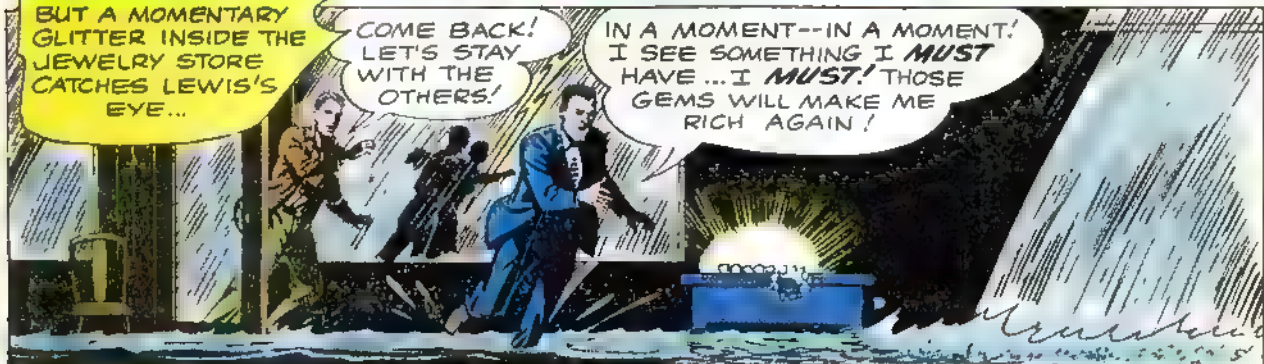
OH I HOPE SO.. HAVEN'T EATEN ALL DAY...



BUT A MOMENTARY GLITTER INSIDE THE JEWELRY STORE CATCHES LEWIS'S EYE...

COME BACK! LET'S STAY WITH THE OTHERS!

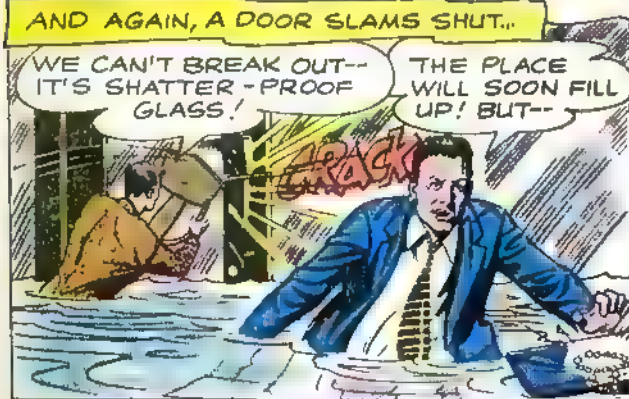
IN A MOMENT--IN A MOMENT! I SEE SOMETHING I **MUST** HAVE... I **MUST!** THOSE GEMS WILL MAKE ME RICH AGAIN!



AND AGAIN, A DOOR SLAMS SHUT...

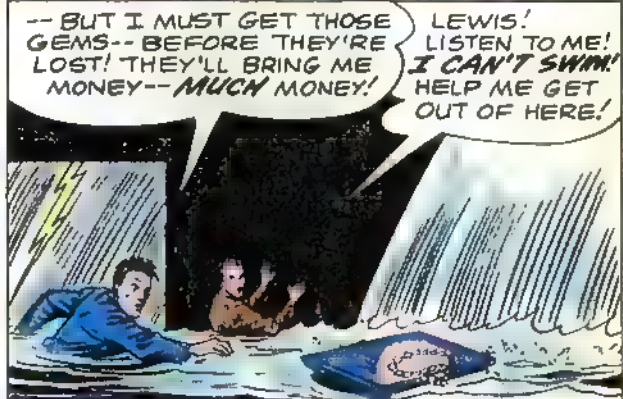
WE CAN'T BREAK OUT-- IT'S SHATTER-PROOF GLASS!

THE PLACE WILL SOON FILL UP! BUT--



-- BUT I MUST GET THOSE GEMS-- BEFORE THEY'RE LOST! THEY'LL BRING ME MONEY-- **MUCH** MONEY!

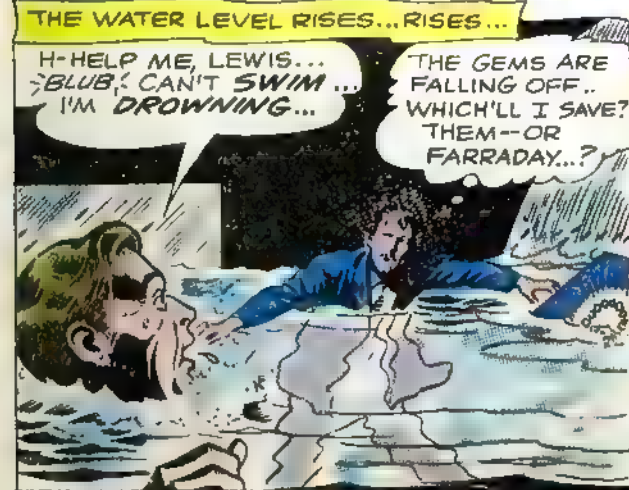
LEWIS! LISTEN TO ME! **I CAN'T SWIM!** HELP ME GET OUT OF HERE!



THE WATER LEVEL RISES...RISES...

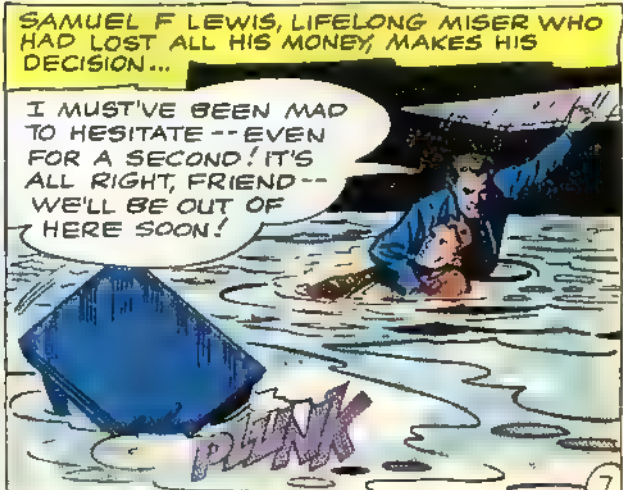
H-HELP ME, LEWIS... **BLUB...** CAN'T SWIM... I'M **DROWNING**...

THE GEMS ARE FALLING OFF.. WHICH'LL I SAVE? THEM--OR FARRADAY...?



SAMUEL F LEWIS, LIFELONG MISER WHO HAD LOST ALL HIS MONEY, MAKES HIS DECISION...

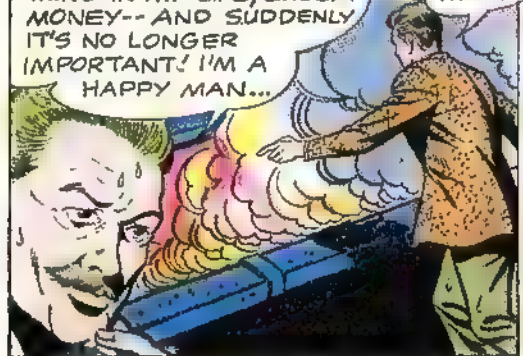
I MUST'VE BEEN MAD TO HESITATE --EVEN FOR A SECOND! IT'S ALL RIGHT, FRIEND-- WE'LL BE OUT OF HERE SOON!



EMERGING ON THE ROOF...

STRANGE, BUT THAT INCIDENT DOWN THERE HAS LIFTED A GREAT BURDEN FROM ME! I'VE NEVER LOOKED AT ANYTHING IN MY LIFE, EXCEPT MONEY-- AND SUDDENLY IT'S NO LONGER IMPORTANT! I'M A HAPPY MAN...

LOOK! THE COFFEE SHOP'S ON FIRE! LET'S GET OVER THERE!

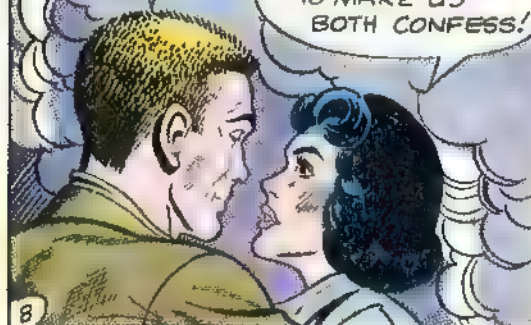


I HESITATED TRYING TO REACH YOU WHEN THAT FIRE GOT OUT OF HAND IN THE KITCHEN, ANNE-- BECAUSE I WAS SCARED STIFF! BUT WHEN I REALIZED YOU'D DIE -- **NOTHING** STOPPED ME!



I SHOULD'VE TOLD YOU A LONG TIME AGO--I'M **NOT** THE DASHING WAR HERO YOU THOUGHT I WAS! I WASN'T EVEN **IN** THE SERVICE!

DON'T FEEL BAD, DEAR! I'M **NOT** THE "HEIRESS" I TOLD YOU I WAS, BUT JUST A PLAIN WORKING GIRL! IT TOOK A CRISIS LIKE THIS TO MAKE US BOTH CONFESS!



LOCATING THE STAIRWAY, THEY COMPLETE THE RIDE! BUT NOW, THE MYSTERIOUS CLOUD IS GONE! HAD THEY DREAMED ALL THIS OR DID THEY REALLY HAVE THE EXPERIENCE OF THEIR LIVES?



HEY! I DIDN'T SEND YOU UP! WHERE'D YOU FOLKS COME FROM?

COULD THEY TELL HIM? FROM AN UNINHABITED TOWN WHERE THEY WERE ABLE TO HAVE A GOOD LOOK AT THEMSELVES? THAT ITS SURROUNDING JUNGLE REPRESENTED AN ENCLOSURE AROUND THEIR EMPTY WORLD, AND THE LION, THE THREAT OF TRUTH THAT PURSUED THEM?

THE END

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IN 1906, J. L. THOMPSON, A GOLDSMITH, VISITED AN EXHIBITION BY THE LATE ROBERT SWAIN GIFFORD, AN AMERICAN PAINTER. WHILE AT THE SHOW, A VOICE WHISPERED IN HIS EAR: "YOU MUST FINISH MY WORK!"



THOMPSON WAS ALSO BESET BY **STRANGE VISIONS** OF GNARLED, TWISTED TREES AND STORMY SKIES! FOR DAYS THEREAFTER, HE COULDN'T WORK! FINALLY, HIS WIFE TOOK HIM TO A PSYCHIATRIST!



PROFESSOR J. H. KYSLOP, A SPECIALIST IN CASES OF OBSESSION, SUGGESTED THAT THOMPSON TRY SOME SKETCHING. HE DID SO, AND HE SOON PAINTED THE SCENE IN HIS VISION AT THE ART GALLERY! THE CRITICS THOUGHT HIS WORK EXCELLENT!



WHEN HE LATER VISITED THE HOME OF GIFFORD IN MONQUITT, MASS., IN 1907, HE SAW AN UNFINISHED PAINTING IN GIFFORD'S STUDIO WHICH RESEMBLED THE PAINTING HE HAD DONE!



AND STRANGER STILL, WHEN WANDERING ABOUT THE GIFFORD ESTATE, HE SOON CAME UPON THE **ACTUAL SCENE!** THE TWO PAINTINGS ARE NOW ON VIEW AT THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH IN NEW YORK!

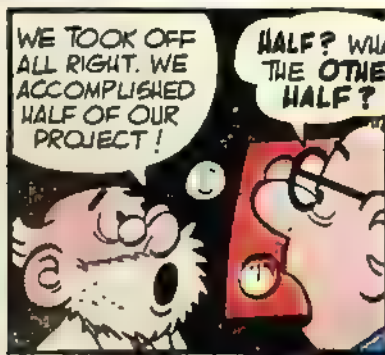
PROFESSOR EUREKA

WELL, WE FINISHED THIS ROCKET. LET'S GET IN AND TRY IT OUT!

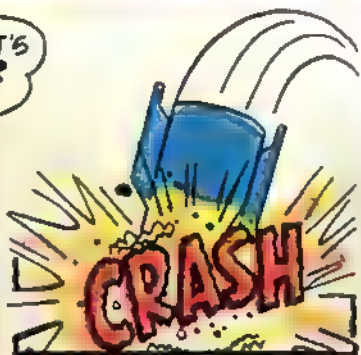


WE TOOK OFF ALL RIGHT. WE ACCOMPLISHED HALF OF OUR PROJECT!

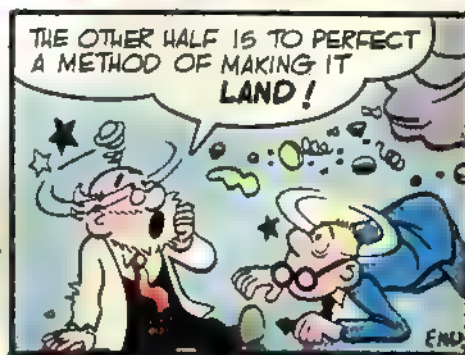
HALF? WHAT'S THE OTHER HALF?



CRASH



THE OTHER HALF IS TO PERFECT A METHOD OF MAKING IT LAND!



END

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Mark Merlin's Mailbox

Dear Mark: I thought my fellow-readers would be interested in this footnote to history. During the last war, my father was an enlisted man at Allied headquarters in North Africa, and during Gen. Eisenhower's visit in November, 1942, he overheard him readily admit he was superstitious. On the night the campaign was launched, the general vigorously rubbed an old silver dollar and a gold five guinea piece, insuring the success of the operation. He was enormously impressed by the fact that Sir Andrew Cunningham, chief of the Allied Naval forces, also carried lucky coins. Later, in July, 1943, as the Allied invasion fleet approached Sicily for a strike against Europe, the general again rubbed them for luck. But on the eve of D-Day, June 6, 1944, he rubbed them so hard, he almost wore them out.

T. J. K., Waco, Texas

(You might be interested in learning that several of our presidents also had fetishes. Pres. Roosevelt, for instance, preferred to wear the same style suit, and always brown. Pres. Hoover jingled the keys in his pocket when he talked. Pres. Coolidge considered it bad luck to carry dollar bills and pocketed only change, while Woodrow Wilson insisted that number 13 was lucky for him.)

* * *

Dear Mark: In your opinion, who is the greatest spiritualist who ever lived?

Sue Lyons, San Francisco

(I have no opinion, but many still regard Daniel Douglas Home as tops, despite the fact that his alleged psychic powers were exposed as tricks and his feats as mere performances of a master magician. After achieving a reputation as a medium in this country in the late 1870's, Home went on a triumphal tour through Europe, which was climaxed by a seance in the palace of Napoleon III of France. Confident that the empress would ask him to communicate with her dead father, Home studied the man's past, arrived prepared with a rubber replica of his right hand. Touching it in the dark, the empress recognized it at once because the third finger was missing. Another famous trick was to seat himself in a chair, order it to rise and bear him around the room. Home claimed that he was being carried by spirits. Cynics scoffed, but count-

less thousands not only cheered him but showered him with expensive gifts, which he modestly preferred to money. By the latter part of the 19th century, having converted his presents into cash, he had become wealthy enough to retire.)

* * *

Dear Mark: I was so impressed by the work of Lee Elias in "Prisoner of the Sub-Microscopic World," in the Sept.-Oct. issue, I'm wondering when we might have the chance to enjoy his art again.

Larry Edwards, Portland, Me.

(You don't have to wonder long. Lee is illustrating the new **SHOWCASE** presentation —**TOMMY TOMORROW OF THE PLANETEERS**, a two-part thriller featuring his origin at the "West Point of Space," on sale at all newstands; Sept. 27th.

Incidentally, our mailbox has been jammed with congratulations on our new letters department. Among the more interesting were from Bill Herbert, Elyria, O.; Leslie Vinick, Norwalk, Conn.; Mark Alridge, Warner Robins, Ga.; Frederick Norwood, Franklin, La.; Frank Lamb, Belmont, Mass.; Louis Biondi, Buffalo, N. Y.; Mike McAtamney, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; Reginald Boucher, Irasburg, Vt.; Phil Meskin (no relation to our Mort); Louis Baer, Joe Westbrook, Alice Savedra, Walter Weichman, and Bobby Groff.

* * *

Dear Mark: We know that a wave of witchcraft hysteria swept through Europe some centuries ago. Do any relics still stand commemorating those events?

Fred Rice, St. Paul, Minn.

(Yes, but most famous of all is the weighing scale that stands in the public square of Oude-water, a tiny village in the Netherlands. Unsuperstitious officials, in an effort to save women accused as witches, erected the scale on which the suspected sorceress would be seated, weighed and then judged innocent of the charge—because she was, in their estimation, too heavy to ride through the air on a broomstick!)

Remember, address all communications to **MARK MERLIN'S MAILBOX**, National Periodical Publications, 575 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y.

HE HAD FACED BITTER ENEMY FIRE AND STEEL, BUT WHAT LURKED IN THAT SILENT, ANCIENT TOWN WAS TO PLUNGE HIM INTO HIS GRIMMEST BATTLE... A DUEL THAT COULD ONLY END WITH THE DEFEAT OF THE GI OR ...

the SPECTRAL SNIPER in KRONEN CASTLE

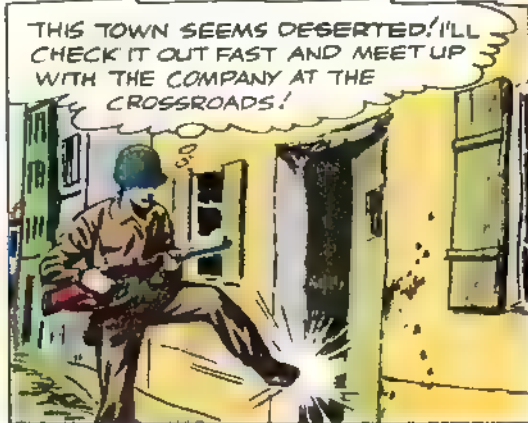
A MEDIEVAL BOWMAN UP THERE! BUT HOW CAN THAT BE? THIS IS 1945 -- WORLD WAR II -- HE'S AIMING HIS CROSSBOW AT ME--!

I WAS BACK--BACK AGAIN IN THE GLOOMY LITTLE TOWN BENEATH THE SULLEN CASTLE ON THE HILL...

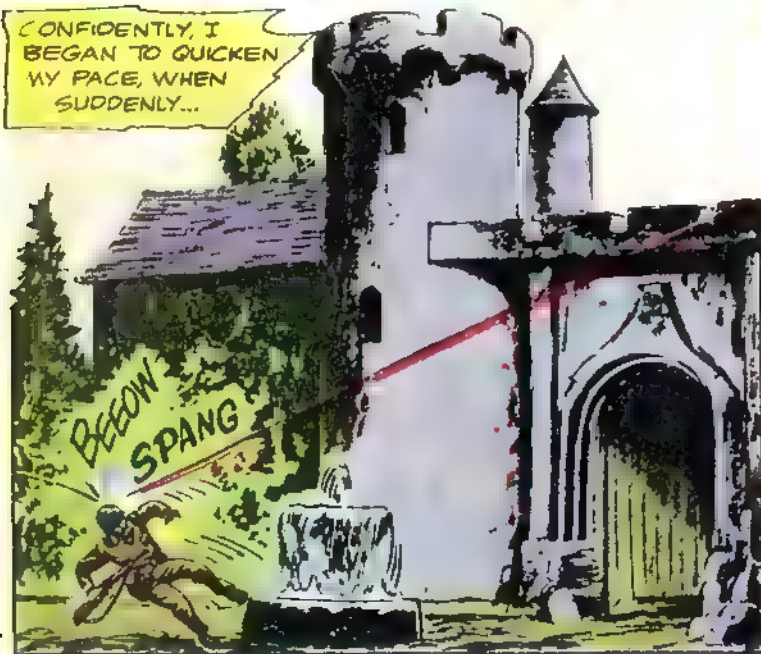
IT'S JUST AS I LEFT IT... NOTHING'S CHANGED SINCE I WAS HERE! I HAD TO RETURN... TO FACE WHATEVER'S WAITING FOR ME... UP THERE!



AS MY FOOTSTEPS ECHOED DOWN THAT NARROW COBBLESTONED GERMAN STREET, MY MIND RACED BACK TO THAT FATEFUL SPRING DAY IN '45 WHEN I WAS PRIVATE CURT VOGEL, U.S. ARMY...

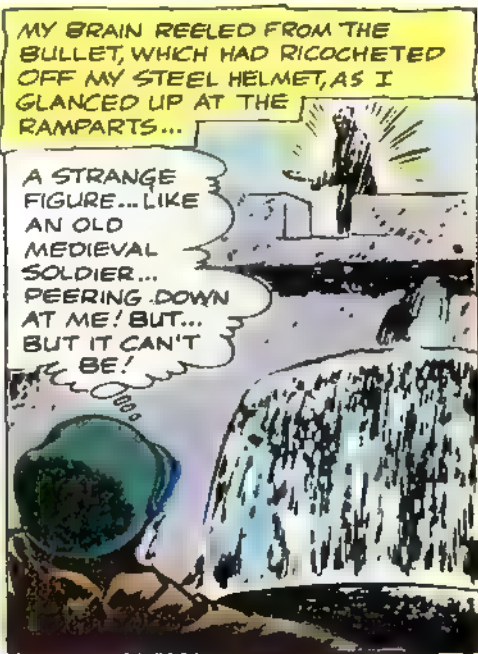


CONFIDENTLY, I BEGAN TO QUICKEN MY PACE, WHEN SUDDENLY...



MY BRAIN REELED FROM THE BULLET, WHICH HAD RICOCHETED OFF MY STEEL HELMET, AS I GLANCED UP AT THE RAMPARTS...

A STRANGE FIGURE... LIKE AN OLD MEDIEVAL SOLDIER... PEERING DOWN AT ME! BUT... BUT IT CAN'T BE!



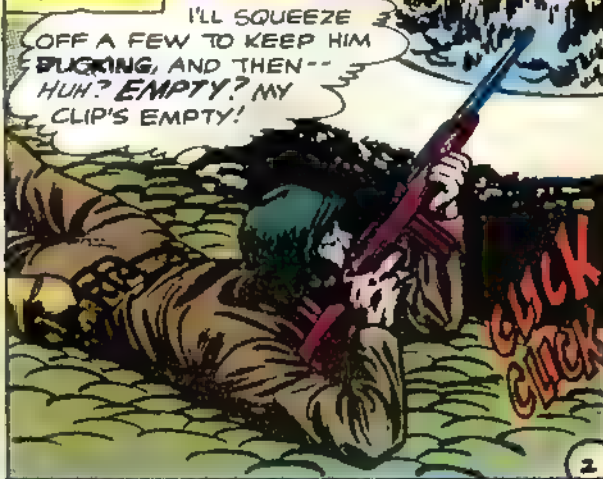
I ROLLED CLOSE AGAINST THE GURGLING FOUNTAIN, HUGGING THE BASE FOR PROTECTION. SHOOK MY BRAIN CLEAR, AND TOOK ANOTHER LOOK

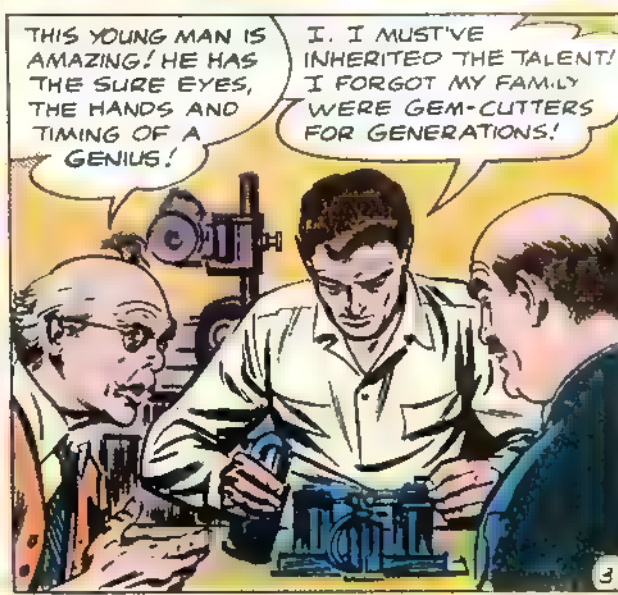
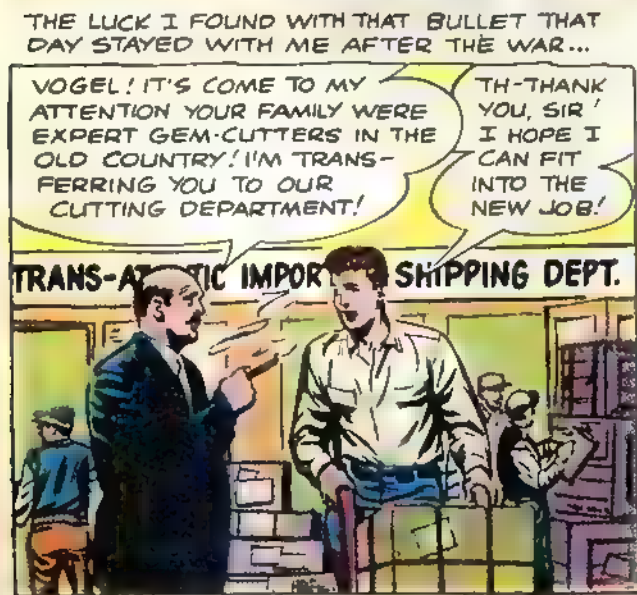
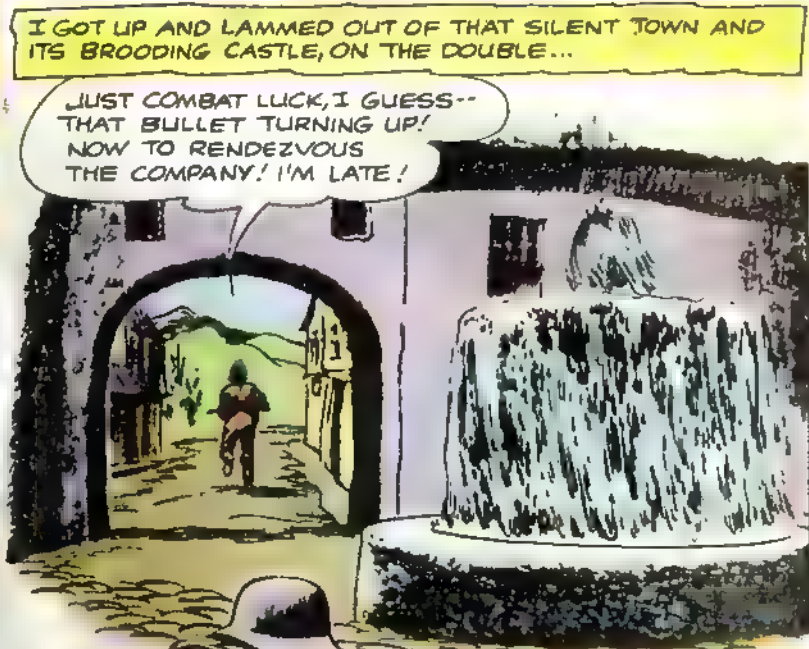
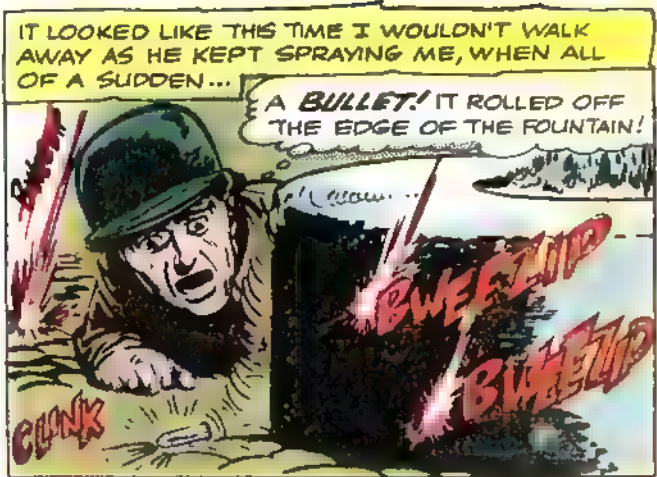
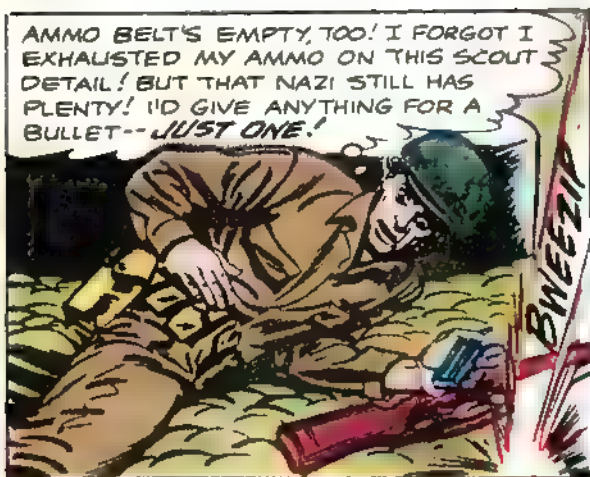
A NAZI SNIPER UP THERE! THAT SLUG MUST'VE MADE ME SEE THINGS!



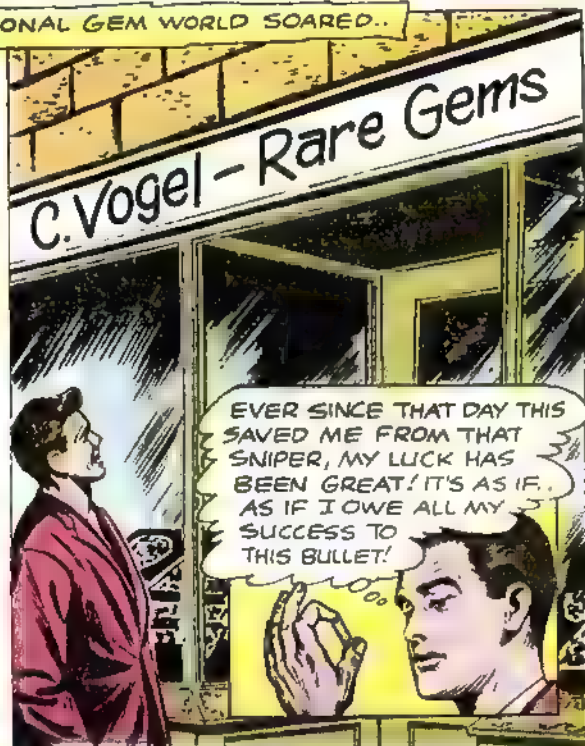
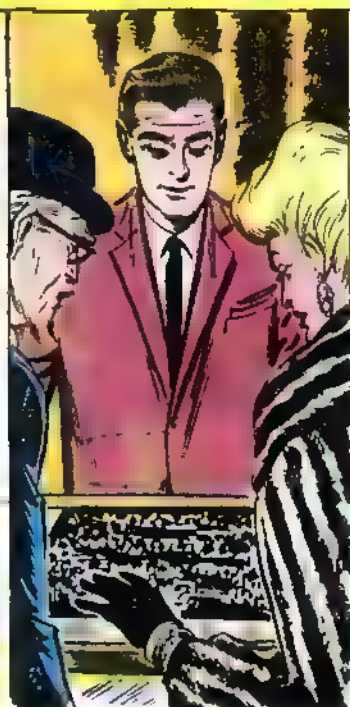
FROM NORMANDY TO THE RHINE, I'D RUN INTO NAZI SNIPERS, AND ALWAYS WALKED AWAY HEALTHY...

I'LL SQUEEZE OFF A FEW TO KEEP HIM BUCKING, AND THEN-- HUH? EMPTY? MY CLIP'S EMPTY!





AFTER THAT, MY REPUTATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL GEM WORLD SOARED...



EVER SINCE THAT DAY THIS SAVED ME FROM THAT SNIPER, MY LUCK HAS BEEN GREAT! IT'S AS IF... AS IF I OWE ALL MY SUCCESS TO THIS BULLET!

AND THEN, ONE DAY, WHILE VISITING MY EUROPEAN BRANCH OFFICE...

BARON VON KRONEN?...WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, BARON?

HERR VOGEL, I HAVE COME TO INFORM YOU THAT - YOU OWE ME YOUR LIFE! AND NOW I'M HERE TO COLLECT ON THAT DEBT!



WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I NEVER SAW YOU BEFORE--

BUT I HAVE SEEN YOU! AND IT IS I WHO MADE YOU WEALTHY AND FAMOUS! YES, IT WAS I WHO INFORMED YOUR EMPLOYER OF YOUR GREAT FAMILY TALENT FOR JEWELS THAT EVEN YOU DIDN'T REALIZE YOU POSSESSED! I STARTED YOU ON YOUR WAY!



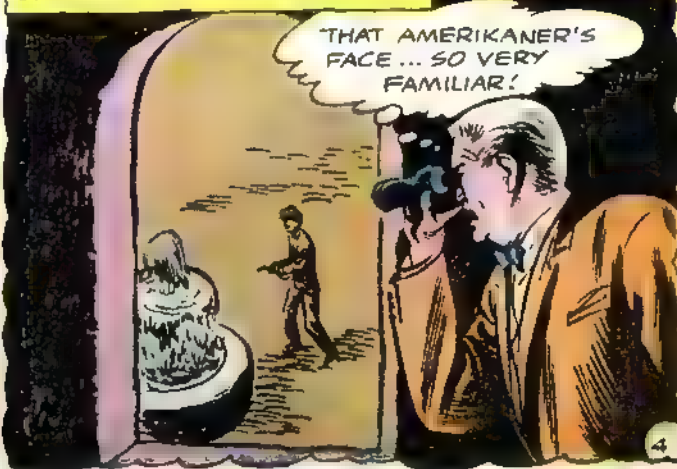
IT WAS I WHO SENT WEALTHY PATRONS TO YOUR SHOP...AND WATCHED YOU DEVELOP INTO THE MASTER JEWELER YOU ARE TODAY!

I...I DON'T BELIEVE IT! HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH MY GOOD- LUCK CHARM?



"PERHAPS THIS WILL CONVINCE YOU 'I WAS WATCHING FROM KRONEN CASTLE THAT DAY IN 1945 WHEN A LONE SOLDIER APPROACHED..."

THAT AMERIKANER'S FACE... SO VERY FAMILIAR!



"WITH MY POWERFUL BINOCULARS I SAW THE NAME STENCILED ON YOUR UNIFORM."

VOGEL! HE MUST BE THE DESCENDANT OF THE VOGELS WHO LIVED HERE IN KRONEN-STADT... BEFORE THEY LEFT FOR AMERICA YEARS AGO!

VOGEL, C.

THEN, WHEN YOU WERE PINNED DOWN BY THE SNIPER AND WITHOUT AMMUNITION, I TOSSED THAT SINGLE CARTRIDGE TO YOU..."

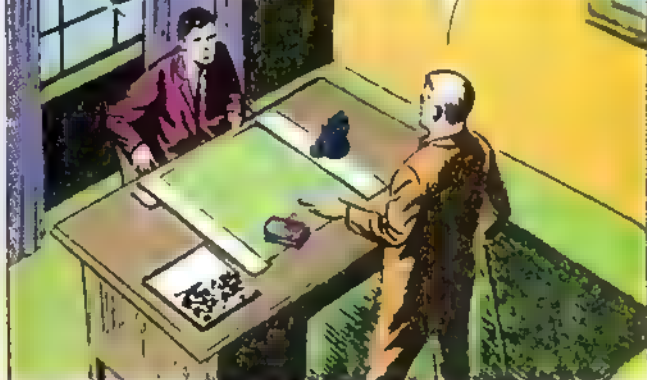
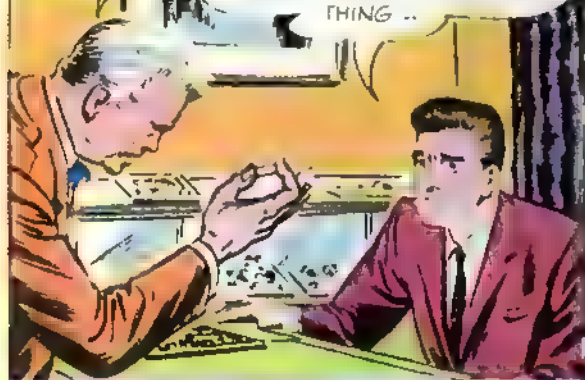
THE AMERIKANER MUST LIVE! I HAVE NEED OF HIM!

NOW DO YOU BELIEVE ME VOGEL WHEN I SAY: "YOU OWE ME YOUR LIFE?"

Y-YES--I BELIEVE YOU 'YOU COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THAT BULLET UNLESS YOU WERE THERE. SO IT WASN'T LUCK THAT SAVED ME... AND PUT ME ON THE PATH TO RICHES AND FAME! YES, I OWE YOU EVERYTHING...

WHAT WHAT DO YOU WANT OF ME?

IN KRONEN CASTLE IS A SAPPHIRE OF FABULOUS VALUE--BUT IT IS A RAW STONE, WORTHLESS UNLESS CUT BY SUCH A MASTER AS YOU! THAT IS WHY I SAVED YOU! CUT THE GEM FOR ME--AND YOUR DEBT IS PAID!



I NEEDED TIME TO PONDER THIS AMAZING BARGAIN WHEN VON KRONEN RETURNED NEXT DAY FOR HIS ANSWER...

I WON'T CUT THAT SAPPHIRE FOR YOU BARON--BECAUSE I SUSPECT THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN YOU TOLD ME! TO BE FRANK I DON'T TRUST YOU

YOU'LL REGRET THIS, VOGEL! I CAN RUIN YOUR LIFE AS EASILY AS I SAVED IT!

LONG AFTER HE'D LEFT HIS THREAT STILL RANG IN MY EARS! TWO DAYS LATER, MY CAREER WAS ROCKED TO ITS FOUNDATION...

WE HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH SUBSTITUTING FALSE GEMS FOR REAL ONES. I REGRET USING YOU MUST INVESTIGATE



OF COURSE THE BARON HAD FRAMED ME BUT BY THE TIME I MANAGED TO CLEAR MYSELF...

PEOPLE WON'T TRUST ME ANY MORE NOW! ALTHOUGH I PROVED MY INNOCENCE, THEY'LL ALWAYS HAVE THAT LINGERING DOUBT!

el - Rare Gems



YES, BARON VON KRONEN HAD MADE GOOD HIS THREAT! THAT'S WHY I'D COME BACK--BACK TO THE MEDIEVAL TOWN AND ITS BROODING CASTLE...

THIS TIME I'M NOT LOOKING FOR A SNIPER.. BUT FOR THE MAN WHO SAVED ME THEN RUINED ME! I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM--TO FORCE HIM TO ADMIT HIS PHONY CHARGES!



BUT AS I WARILY ENTERED HIS ANCESTRAL HOME...

SOMEONE SHOT AT ME-- GREAT GUNS! IT'S A CROSSBOW BOLT!



IT COULD ONLY BE THE BARON, USING THE ANCIENT WEAPON, I THOUGHT, WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN.

THE SPECTRAL FIGURE OF A MEDIEVAL Bowman-- THE SAME FIGURE I SAW YEARS AGO WHEN I THOUGHT IT WAS A HALLUCINATION CAUSED BY THE SNIPER'S BULLET!



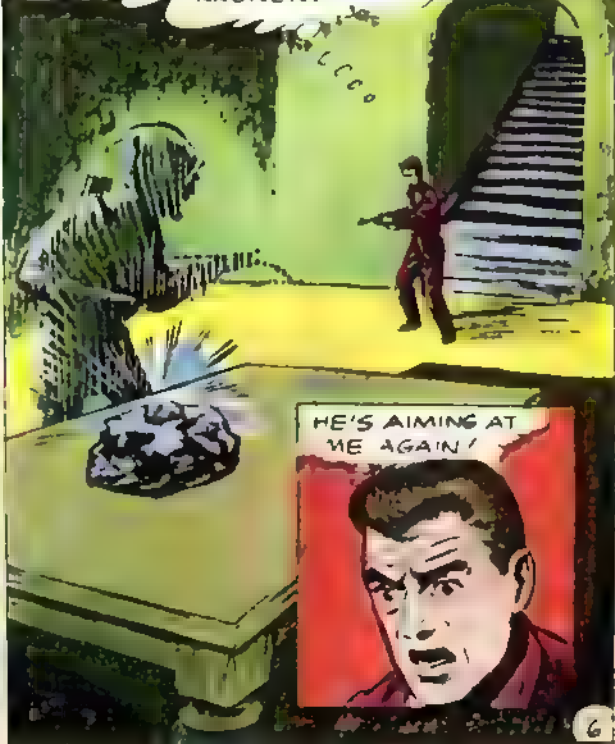
IT WAS THE BARON, DISGUISED, OF COURSE! BUT WHEN I OPENED FIRE...

GOOD HEAVENS! IT IS A SPECTRE-- MY BULLETS PASS RIGHT THROUGH HIM! BUT HIS BOLTS ARE SOLID... TOO SOLID!



I PURSUED MY PHANTOM FOE TO AN UNDERGROUND CHAMBER...

THERE HE IS--AND A ROCK WITH A BLUE STONE SET IN IT! THAT MUST BE THE GIANT SAPPHIRE OF BARON VON KRONEN!



I FLED UP THE STAIRS TO ESCAPE WHEN...

AN IRON GRILL--!
I'M TRAPPED--
AND THAT BOWMAN'S
CLOSING IN!



GOT TO KEEP SHOOTING! MAYBE IT'S GOT
A VULNERABLE SPOT--HUN?
MY AMMO'S GONE!



THE CRITICAL MOMENT HAD REPEATED ITSELF--
EXCEPT THIS TIME, THE ENEMY WAS INVINCIBLE
AND NO ONE WOULD THROW ME A LIFE-SAVING
BULLET! ABRUPTLY..



SOMEONE HANDING ME A
BULLET--A SILVER
BULLET!

I WHIRLED TO FACE...

BARON VON
KRONEN!
WHERE...
DID YOU
COME
FROM?

THROUGH A
SECRET
DOOR! I KNEW
YOU WOULD
COME HERE--
SEEKING REVENGE!
BUT QUICKLY--USE
THIS SILVER CARTRIDGE!
IT IS THE ONLY THING
THAT CAN HARM
THAT PHANTOM
WHICH HAS ALWAYS
KEPT ME FROM
THE SAPPHIRE!

I SLAMMED THE GLEAMING CARTRIDGE INTO MY CARBINE AS VON
KRONEN RACED ON...

SINCE ANCIENT DAYS, A SILVER
BULLET FIRED BY ONE OF YOUR FAMILY HAD THE
POWER TO DESTROY ANYTHING...LIVING
OR OTHERWISE!



IT'S AIMING AT US!
SHOOT, VOGEL --
SHOOT!



SUDDENLY, I REALIZED HE'D GIVEN ME THIS SECOND BULLET NOT JUST TO SAVE ME...

SO THAT'S THE MAIN REASON--YOU NEEDED ME! YOU COULDN'T DESTROY THAT SAPPHIRE'S GUARDIAN WITHOUT MY HELP!



YOU SHATTERED THE GEM DELIBERATELY!

SURE--AND NOW YOU'RE GOING TO CONFESS TO THE LAW YOU FRAMED ME--SO I CAN GO BACK IN BUSINESS AGAIN!



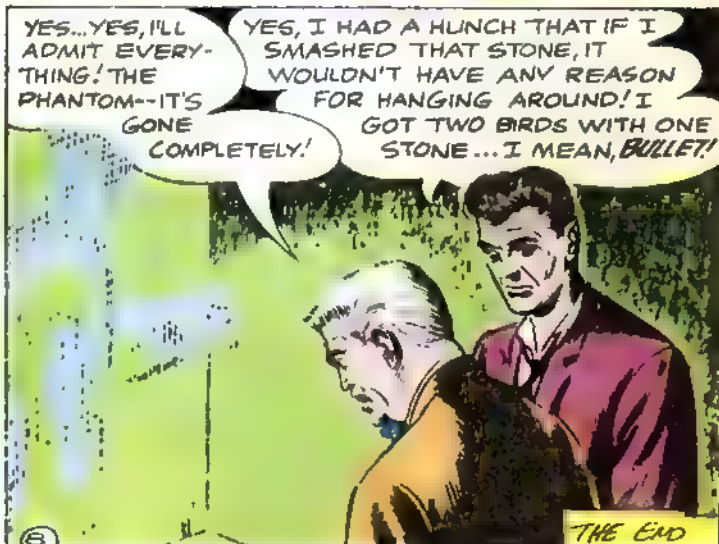
I HAD PLAYED RIGHT INTO HIS HANDS! IF I DESTROYED THE SPECTRE, VON KRONEN WOULD SEIZE THE SAPPHIRE! IF I DIDN'T, THE BOWMAN MIGHT GET US! I THOUGHT FAST--AIMED--AND...

YOU... YOU HIT THE SAPPHIRE! AND THE PHANTOM--IT'S FADING AWAY!



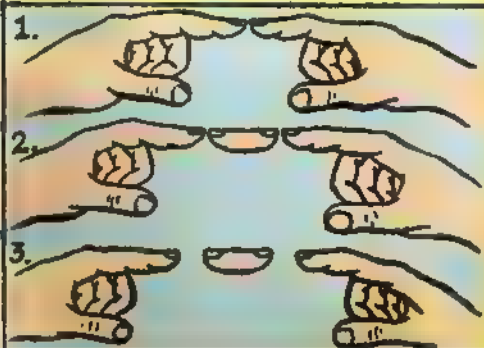
YES...YES, I'LL ADMIT EVERYTHING! THE PHANTOM--IT'S GONE COMPLETELY!

YES, I HAD A HUNCH THAT IF I SMASHED THAT STONE, IT WOULDN'T HAVE ANY REASON FOR HANGING AROUND! I GOT TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE... I MEAN, BULLET!



ADVERTISEMENT

Hold your hands at eye level 9 inches away in the position shown in Drawing 1. Look at the tips of your fingers, then gaze beyond your fingers and you will appear to be holding another small finger as shown in Drawing 2. Now move your hands so that the ends of your fingers will be about half an inch apart and the mystery finger will then appear floating in air as shown in Drawing 3.



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Medical Corps



1
CHEST
MIGHTY CHEST

2
ARM
MIGHTY ARM

3
BACK
MIGHTY BACK

4
GRIP
MIGHTY GRIP

5
LEGS
MIGHTY LEGS

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WANT**
Check ALL Your
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How would **YOU**
like to have 181
inch ARMS a 5

became Athlete of the Year. Lifted the front End of a 2700 lb. Car. Gult. being a bag-of-bones weakling like I was. In 10 minutes of fun a day. A.B.C. CAN DO FOR YOU ALL HE DID FOR ME! I gained 25 TERRIFIC LBS. of HANDSOME POWER-PACKED MUSCLES.

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